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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2490
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1882
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2237
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001115

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: PF-ZAPU GOING FORWARD WITH SPLIT FROM ZANU-PF

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Don Curtis for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) On December 10, poloff met with a group of PF-ZAPU officials who explained the rationale for revitalizing the former liberation party and separating from ZANU-PF. They stressed that they had undertaken a clean break from ZANU-PF and blamed the Mugabe regime for Zimbabwe's disastrous decline. On December 13 and 14 the party will hold a convention in Bulawayo which will be followed by a full-party congress in January to build-out party structures and elect a chairman. While PF-ZAPU shares many of the MDC's reform-minded goals, the group stressed that their roots as an African independence party will give them greater regional legitimacy than that granted to the MDC. Initial meetings with leaders in Botswana, South Africa, and Zambia have been well received, and they are eager to establish ties with the U.S. END SUMMARY.

Disaffection Lead to Split

12. (SBU) Poloff met with a group of eight members of PF-ZAPU in Harare at their invitation on December 10. The group consisted of a mix of PF-ZAPU steering committee members from Bulawayo and local Harare-based representatives. The PF-ZAPU representatives explained that the party's decision to separate from ZANU-PF was due to their treatment by ZANU-PF as junior partners in government and their exclusion from meaningful positions. The party rejected many of Mugabe's disastrous economic and political policies, and they blamed ZANU-PF for the economic neglect of Matabeleland by the government. They have also felt entirely unrepresented in the ongoing power-sharing negotiations between ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations.

Conference to Establish Political Structures

¶3. (SBU) According to steering committee member Bukhosi Hadebe, PF-ZAPU has scheduled a two-day party convention for December 13 and 14 in Bulawayo. At this convention the party intends to nominate 300 delegates, consisting of members from all 10 Zimbabwean provinces, who will form the party backbone. The convention will be followed by a full-party congress during the first half of January where they will elect a chairman. The group emphasized that PF-ZAPU is a national party and not ethnically or regionally limited.

¶4. (SBU) The group made clear that in November PF-ZAPU nullified the 1987 Unity Accords that merged PF-ZAPU into ZANU-PF. We were provided a copy of the press release from November 8 that announced PF-ZAPU's separation from ZANU-PF. PF-ZAPU member Ndaba Mabhena referred to the split as "a total divorce."

PF-ZAPU's Leadership

¶5. (SBU) The leadership of the revitalized PF-ZAPU party currently consists of a handful of members including Dumiso Debengwa, who served as minister of Home Affairs from 1992 to 2000, Cyril Ndebele, the former speaker of the House of Assembly, war veterans leader Andrew Ndlovu, former PF-ZAPU secretary general Welshman Mabhena, former government

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minister Thenjiwe Lesabe, and spokesman Effort Nkomo. (NOTE: Vice-President Joseph Msika does not appear to be part of the PF-ZAPU revival and local independent press reports have reported that there are strained relations between him and the revivalists. They were also dismissive of ZANU-PF chairman John Nkomo who they said had been co-opted. END NOTE.)

Reaching Out Regionally and Internationally

¶6. (SBU) In addition to rebuilding PF-ZAPU as an independent party, PF-ZAPU leaders are now embarking on a strategy of national and international outreach. Regionally this has included meetings with ANC leader Jacob Zuma, Botswanan president Ian Khama, Zambian president Rupiah Banda, and will lead to meetings with Namibian president Hifikepunye Pohamba, and Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete. The group said that Jacob Zuma had been very receptive to a re-born PF-ZAPU.

¶7. (SBU) They also discussed their interest in building ties internationally, in particular, with the U.S. and UK, and emphasized their need for financial support to maintain their party. The budget for the conference is an estimated US\$62,000.

What PF-ZAPU Offers

¶8. (SBU) The group made the case that unlike the MDC, which struggles for regional respect from SADC countries, PF-ZAPU has an undeniable claim as an African independence party. This legitimization made them believe that they would be able to place greater pressure and gain greater acceptance from SADC peer countries. They stressed that they shared many of the MDC's concerns about the political, economic, and humanitarian crises in Zimbabwe, and squarely placed the blame at the feet of Robert Mugabe. They spoke of Mugabe with derision and disgust. When asked what their position was regarding those PF-ZAPU members who had profited from close ZANU-PF ties, they emphasized that they knew who they were and they were being excluded from participating in the

reborn party.

COMMENT

19. (C) It remains to be seen whether the separation of PF-ZAPU from ZANU-PF is a minor irritant to ZANU-PF hegemony, or whether it will represent a significant challenge to the ruling party. The original ZAPU began as a national movement but at the time of the 1987 Unity Accords was fundamentally a regional party based in Matabeleland, and PF-ZAPU has not yet made a case that it will have a national following. The two most prominent ex-ZAPU members, Vice-President Joseph Msika and ZANU-PF chairman John Nkomo, both from Matabeleland, are not leaving ZANU-PF to join the new party. ZANU-PF influence in Matabeleland--it has only one MP--is far less than in the rest of the country, so it is doubtful that ZANU-PF defections in Matabeleland will have much impact. At this point, the formation of the new party would seem to have more symbolic than real value by demonstrating dissension within ZANU-PF. END COMMENT.

CURTIS